



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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DEQ to conduct watershed inspections in Lake Pontchartrain Basin

BATON ROUGE – Improper wastewater discharge is one of the leading causes of pollution to waterways in Louisiana and throughout the nation. In an effort to ensure that the state's watersheds are better protected from wastewater discharges, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality will be conducting a thorough inspection of all potential dischargers in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.

Field staff from around the state will make a detailed examination of all known, unknown and potential wastewater dischargers in Livingston, Tangipahoa and St. Tammany parishes beginning on March 3. Inspectors will be checking for discharge sources and making sure each source has the proper permits.

The goal of the inventory-finding mission is not to find violators for enforcement actions and penalties, but to make sure the department knows who is discharging. In order to protect Lake Pontchartrain and other watersheds, the first step is to assist those who don't have the proper permits or are out of compliance with environmental regulations.

"The department's goal is to manage the state's watersheds and to manage them properly," said Chris Piehler, Clean Waters Program director. "We have conducted other watershed inventory inspections and found many restaurants, sewer systems, governmental buildings and other places (that you normally wouldn't consider to be environmental risks) that were not meeting environmental regulations. It's not that these citizens were willfully disobeying the law or conducting behavior detrimental to the environment; most were simply unaware of the regulations. For sound water quality management, we must ensure that all dischargers are on the same environmental playing field."

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